

2-1-1 Directs Consumers to Essential Community Services

In many states, dialing “2-1-1” provides individuals and families in need with a shortcut through what may be a bewildering maze of health and human service agencies’ phone numbers. By simply dialing 2-1-1, those in need of assistance are referred, and sometimes connected, to appropriate agencies and community organizations.

Background

In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reserved the 2-1-1 dialing code for community information and referral services. The 2-1-1 code was intended as an easy-to-remember and universally-recognizable number that would enable a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies. Dialing 2-1-1 helps the elderly, the disabled, those who do not speak English, those who are having a personal crisis, the illiterate, or those who are new to their communities, among others, by providing referrals to and information about health and human services organizations and agencies.

Currently the following states provide 2-1-1 referral services: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. Other states are in various phases of implementation.

How 2-1-1 Works

2-1-1 works a bit like 9-1-1. Calls to 2-1-1 are routed by the local telephone company to a local or regional calling center. The 2-1-1 center’s referral specialists question callers, access databases of resources available from private and public health and human service agencies, match the callers’ needs to available resources and link or refer them directly to an agency or organization that can help.

What Types of Referrals 2-1-1 Offers

- **Basic Human Needs Resources** – food and clothing banks, shelters, rent assistance, and utility assistance.
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** - health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health resources, health insurance programs for children, medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.
- **Work Support** – financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance and education programs.
- **Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities** – adult day care, congregate meals, respite care, home health care, transportation, and homemaker services.



- **Children, Youth and Family Support** – child care, after school programs, educational programs for low-income families, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, and protective services.

Individuals who wish to donate time or money to health and human services-related agencies and organizations can also dial 2-1-1.

To find out more about 2-1-1 or to find out if your state has implemented 2-1-1, visit www.211.org or contact the FCC's Consumer Center at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY.

###

For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservice.html.

This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

030514

